



Early Childhood Policy Council Council and Committee Member Biographies

September 2026

Early Childhood Policy Council Members

The Governor's appointees are:

Ranae Amezquita, of Montebello, is the Executive Director of the Early Childhood Education Division with the Los Angeles Unified School District. With extensive experience overseeing preschool and Transitional Kindergarten (TK) initiatives, she has played a key role in expanding access to high-quality early learning across diverse communities. A central part of her work includes building strong bridges between early childhood programs, TK, and other departments within LAUSD. She collaborates across divisions to ensure alignment in practices, smooth transitions for students, and stronger coordination between programs serving young learners. She works closely with cross-functional teams to navigate challenges and improve systems that directly impact classrooms. At the core of her leadership is a clear belief: that early education lays the foundation for lifelong success, and that every child deserves the opportunity to begin their educational journey in a supportive, high-quality environment.

Gabriela Orozco Gonzalez, of Los Angeles County, is a member of the California State Board of Education and a second-grade teacher in the Montebello Unified School District, where she has served students and families for over 25 years. She has taught across grade levels and is committed to advancing equitable, student-centered instructional practices that support access, engagement, and strong academic foundations for all learners. Gonzalez has contributed to statewide assessment efforts as a performance task writer and item reviewer for the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, with a focus on accessibility and bias reduction. She has also supported professional learning for educators across the United States, with a focus on best practices in standards-aligned instruction and collaborative learning. Gonzalez holds a Master of Arts in Educational Leadership and a Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies, with a minor in Physics, from California State University, Dominguez Hills, and an Associate of Arts in Child Development.

Karla Pleitéz Howell, of Los Angeles, has been Chief Executive Officer of First 5 Los Angeles since 2023. She was Branch Chief of the Child Care and Development Division at the California Department of Social Services from 2021 to 2023. Pleitez Howell was Chief of Policy and Programs at Advancement Project from 2014 to 2021. She was a Supervising Staff Attorney for Public Counsel from 2006 to 2014. Pleitez Howell was a Directing Attorney at El Rescate from 2004 to 2006. She is a member of the Los Angeles County Prevention and Promotion System Governing Committee and Los Angeles Chamber. Pleitez Howell earned a Juris Doctor degree from University of California College of the Law, San Francisco and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from University of California, Los Angeles.

Tony Jordan, of Modesto, is the Executive Director of the Child & Family Services (CFS) Division of the Stanislaus County Office of Education (SCOE) and the Central California Migrant Head Start (CCMHS) Program Joint Powers Authority (JPA) – organizations known and recognized locally, regionally, throughout the State, and nationally for delivering high-quality services that foster school readiness, family/community engagement, and social competence. Previously, Jordan served in a variety of roles for early education programs with SCOE and Modesto City Schools including Co-Interim Director, Early Childhood Program Coordinator, Special Projects Coordinator, Planning Coordinator, Data Analyst, and After School Program Coordinator. Finally, as an Intelligence Analyst for the U.S. Army, Jordan proudly served our nation for nearly a decade including time in Germany, Korea, and Afghanistan. Jordan earned a Master of Education degree in Educational Leadership from the American College of Education and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology from Chapman University. He holds a Child Development Program Director Permit from the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

Rebecca (Becky) Beland McNaught, of Sacramento, has been the Senior Vice President of Communications and External Affairs at the Sacramento Kings since 2022. She was the Chief of Staff to the First Partner in the Governor's Office from 2019 to 2022. McNaught was the Democratic Staff Counsel for the United States Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship from 2017 to 2018. She was a Counsel and Legislative Assistant to United States Senator Barbara Boxer from 2014 to 2017. McNaught was the Deputy Managing Editor for The Shriver Report from 2012 to 2014. She is a Member of the Board of the California Partners Project. McNaught earned a Juris Doctor degree from American University and a Bachelor of Arts degree in History and Journalism from New York University.

Stephen Prophet, of Lincoln, has been Director of the Early Education Division at the California Department of Education since 2019, where he has held several positions since 2015, including Associate Director of the Early Learning and Care Division and Staff Services Manager of Fiscal and Administrative Services Division. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Accountancy from California State University, Sacramento.

Diana Ramos, of Laguna Beach, has been the California Surgeon General since 2022 and Adjunct Assistant Clinical Professor at the University of Southern California, Keck School of Medicine since 1999. She was Founder and Chief Executive Officer of GamiFi Health from 2018 to 2022. Ramos was a Per Diem Physician at Kaiser Permanente from 1998 to 2022. She held several positions at the California Department of Public Health between 2017 and 2022, including Public Health Administrator in the Center for Healthy Communities and Public Health Medical Officer. Ramos was Director of Reproductive Health, Child and Adolescent Health, at the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health from 2005 to 2017. She was Chief Medical Officer at Alpha Medical Center Inc. from 2003 to 2005. Ramos was Senior Regional Medical Research Specialist at Pfizer Inc. from 2000 to 2003. She was Staff Obstetrician at Clinica Humanitaria from 1999 to 2000. Ramos is an Executive Board Member for the California Maternal Care Quality Collaborative. She earned a Doctor of Medicine degree from University of Southern California, a Master in Public Health degree from the University of California, Los Angeles, a Master of Business Administration degree from University of California, Irvine, and a Bachelor of Arts in Communications, Arts and Science, from the University of Southern California.

Claire Ramsey, of South San Francisco, is the appointed Chair of the Early Childhood Policy Council. In August 2026, she became Acting Director of the Department of Aging. Ramsey served as Chief Deputy Director at the California Department of Social Services from 2021 to 2026. She was a Senior Staff Attorney at Justice in Aging from 2016 to 2021. Ramsey was an Associate at ADZ Law LLP from 2015 to 2016. She was a Staff Attorney at the Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County from 2012 to 2015. Ramsey held several positions at the Child Care Law Center from 2006 to 2012, including Senior Staff Attorney and Equal Justice Public Works Fellow. Ramsey is a member of the South San Francisco Library Board. She earned a Juris Doctor degree from the University of California College of the Law, San Francisco, a Master of Arts degree in Drama at San Francisco State University, and a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from the University of California, Berkeley.

Maéva G. Renaud, of Vacaville, has been the Vice President of Advocacy and Policy for Kidango since 2021, designing solutions that elevate the perspectives of families and the early learning workforce. She started as Kidango's Community Organizer in 2019, equipping parents and teachers to use their voices to influence and improve child care and preschool policy. With over 15 years of experience in teaching, nonprofit management, community engagement, and policy advocacy, she currently serves on the Alameda County Early Care & Education Planning Council's Community Advisory Council on Measure C and is a co-founder of Black Californians for Early Care and Education. She holds a Bachelor's in Multimedia Communications from Florida Atlantic University, an M.S. Ed. in Special Education from Brooklyn College, and an M.A. in Urban Studies with a concentration in Arts in Transformation from Eastern University.

Elizabeth (Liz) Simons, of Atherton, is a philanthropic leader with an extensive record of engagement in education, nonprofit governance, criminal justice reform, and journalism. She is the co-founder and chair of the Heising-Simons Foundation, which she established with her husband, Mark Heising, in 2007. The foundation is dedicated to advancing sustainable solutions in climate and clean energy, enabling groundbreaking scientific research, enhancing early childhood education and care, and supporting human rights in the United States.

Throughout her career, Simons has championed efforts to create a more just and equitable society. Her professional journey spans philanthropy, nonprofit leadership, and education, with a focus on supporting young learners and improving outcomes for vulnerable children. Before establishing the foundation, Simons began her career as an educator, teaching in Spanish-bilingual and English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms in under-resourced schools. She later founded Stretch to Kindergarten, an innovative early childhood program designed to support young learners during the critical transition into formal schooling.

Simons is a board member of Math for America, which supports excellence in STEM teaching, and the Learning Policy Institute, which conducts and communicates research to improve education policy and practice. She is also deeply involved in organizations dedicated to criminal justice reform, including The Marshall Project, One for Justice, and Smart Justice California.

Simons earned her bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of California, Berkeley, and her master's degree in education from Stanford University.

Dr. Matilda Soria, of Fresno, is the Executive Director of the Child and Family Success Division at the Office of the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools (FCSS). In this capacity, she oversees the Early Care and Education, Health Services, Cradle to Career, and Foster and Homeless Youth Education Services Departments. She also supports government relations efforts, advancing policies that improve outcomes for children and families across the region and state. With more than 20 years of experience in educational leadership, systems development, and cross-sector collaboration, Dr. Soria has led initiatives that strengthen early learning, family and community engagement, and workforce development. She has been with FCSS since 2015, serving in roles including Senior Director and Program Coordinator for Early Care and Education. Prior to her work at the county office, Dr. Soria spent over a decade at Reading and Beyond, where she held leadership roles including Research and Development Director and Director of the Parent Information and Resource Center. She also served as an Adjunct Professor at California State University, Fresno. A proud product of Fresno County's public schools, Dr. Soria remains deeply committed to the community she serves. She currently serves on the boards of Fresno Metro Ministries (a community-based organization focused on advancing health, environmental quality, economic development, and resilience in the San Joaquin Valley) and Storyland (a beloved literacy-themed park in Fresno). Dr. Soria earned her Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership and her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from California State University, Fresno, and her Master of Education in Human Development and Psychology from Harvard University.

Ristyn Woolley, of Sacramento, has been Director of the California Head Start Collaboration Office at the California Department of Social Services since 2023, where she was a Child Development Consultant in the Policy Office from 2021 to 2023. She was a Child Development Consultant in the Early Learning and Care Division at the Department of Education from 2019 to 2021. Woolley held several positions at the YMCA of the East Bay from 2015 to 2019, including Child Development Services Manager and Education Analyst. Woolley was an Assessor and Assessment Coordinator for SEED of Early Literacy Initiative at the Kenneth Rainin Foundation from 2014 to 2015. She was an Associate Governmental Program Analyst at the California Department of Mental Health from 2010 to 2012. Woolley was an Associate Governmental Program Analyst at the California Department of Education from 2008 to 2010. She was a Primary Intervention Specialist at the Elk Grove Unified School District from 2004 to 2005. Woolley earned a Master of Arts degree in Early Childhood Education from Mills College and a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from the University of the Pacific.

The Senate's appointees are:

Catherine Brozowski, of Santa Barbara, has served as the Executive Director of the Audacious Foundation for 11 years, a charitable foundation advancing early childhood education as a cornerstone of Whole Child Education. In her role, she partners with early childhood directors, educators, and transitional kindergarten leaders and teachers to strengthen Santa Barbara County's early learning network, with a focus on quality early childhood education, nature-based learning, workforce support, and sector building professional development. Previously, Catherine was Vice President at the Orfalea Foundation for eight years, where she led the foundation's Education portfolio—supporting early learning and broader student success efforts—and oversaw Operations, Finance, and Human Resources, including during the organization's planned sunset. She has also served as Vice President of Programs at the Santa Barbara Foundation, and Corporate Giving Manager for Washington Mutual.

She serves on the Board of Leading From Within, as Vice Chair of Santa Barbara's Foundation Roundtable, as an Advisory Board Member of the REACH Fellowship, as a Co-Leader to her Girl Scout Troop, and as a member of the PTA. Catherine holds a B.A. from the University of California, San Diego and a Master's of Public Administration with an emphasis in Nonprofit Management from the University of Washington. She has two children aged six and thirteen—who keep her on her toes and regularly remind her that the best learning often includes a little risk, a few scrapes, and a lot of resilience.

Sonia P. Jaramillo, of Gonzalez, has been in the Preschool-12 educational system for 25 years. Jaramillo has been a teacher, a principal and director of categorical programs. She is an elected official and serves as the board president for the Gonzales Unified School District. She earned a Master of Education degree from San Jose State University and holds a Reading Specialist Credential, a Bilingual Teaching Credential and an Administrative Credential. Currently, Jaramillo is the Senior Director for the Monterey County Early Learning Program.

Wendy Sims-Moten, of Santa Barbara, has worked in cradle-to-career initiatives for more than 30 years. She has been with First 5 Santa Barbara County since 1999 and has served as Executive Director since 2017. She currently serves as President of the First 5 Association. Wendy has served on a range of local and regional boards and initiatives, reflecting her deep commitment to community collaboration. Most notably, she served on the Santa Barbara Unified School District Board from 2016 to 2024 and has been Board Chair of Gateway Educational Services since 2017. She also contributed her leadership to the Uplift Central Coast Steering Committee. In her role as Executive Director of First 5 Santa Barbara County, Wendy is leading a collaboration with the Annie E. Casey Foundation to convene 35 cross-sector leaders—including public servants, nonprofit leaders, healthcare professionals, and educators—in a leadership development initiative. This effort focuses on strengthening collaboration, driving measurable change, and advancing equity for children prenatal through age five and their families across Santa Barbara County.

The Assembly's appointees are:

Natali Gaxiola, of Hawthorne, has been teaching at Felton State Preschool in the Lennox School District since 2003. As a preschool teacher and instructional leader, she has been featured in print and online materials, such as the teaching channel, Development and Research in Early Math Education Network resources, and Heinemann's *Young Children's Mathematics* (Carpenter et al. 2016). She presents regularly at local and national mathematics conferences and coauthored the "Preschool Connections" chapter in Stenhouse Publisher's *Choral Counting & Counting Collections: transforming the PreK-5 math classroom*. She was awarded Early Childhood Educator of Los Angeles County in 2019. She is a member of the California School Employees Association. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology from California State University Dominguez Hills.

Stephanie Barron Lu, of Santa Cruz County, believes in the power and potential of community building and strengthening families. She has served as Executive Director of Positive Discipline Community Resources (PDCR) for 8 years: a social justice, grassroots nonprofit committed to serving local children, youth, and families across sectors of our community with trauma informed, culturally relevant, evidence based Positive Discipline programs. Through her personal and professional values, she stands for courage, compassion, dignity, well-being, and joy for herself and all others. She serves our community through various leadership and volunteer roles such as co-chair of WILDR (Women In Leadership for Diverse Representation), current member of the Children Youth and Family Well-being cabinet, was the former co-chair of the United Way Children's Network Cabinet, former Board Secretary of the YWCA of Watsonville, as well as part of the Family First Prevention Advisory Committee for the State of California, and is a member of her local County CARESJ Equity advisory group, YARR's Rapid Response Network, Pajaro Valley Collaborative, and the RISE together coalition of BIPOC leaders working collaboratively to advance racial equity in Santa Cruz County. She graduated Summa Cum Laude from University of California Santa Cruz with a Bachelor's in Psychology and was named Outstanding Recent Alum in 2026. Her work has brought her hands-on knowledge across sectors of our diverse Central Coast community, she is

bolstered by her lived experience as a young student parent, a first-generation college graduate, and proud daughter of immigrants. Her most sacred work is at home with her high school sweetheart/ now husband, learning and growing whilst raising two beautiful children together.

Socorro Martin, of Salinas, became a home daycare provider in 2019. She is a proud union member of the SEIU 521. Prior to providing home daycare, Martin was a preschool teacher in Salinas for 23 years. As a devoted teacher who loves her work, Martin believes in the importance of early childhood education. She participates in her union and now on this Council to make a difference for the future of California's children. Martin is a wife and mother and since becoming an "empty nester" five years ago, she considers the children in her care like her grandbabies.

Andrea Fernandez Mendoza, of Los Angeles, has been the Vice President of Education/Program Director for California Children's Academy since 2006 and joined the organization in 1993. In her current role, Mendoza is fully responsible for the development, direction and coordination of 15 full-day, subsidized early education and development programs serving infants, toddlers and preschoolers. Her 30+ years of experience in the field has brought her a wealth of hands-on knowledge and practical experience in the field of Early Childhood Education. Andrea holds a Master's degree in Early Childhood Education Leadership, earned her Bachelor of Arts degree with a specialization in Human Development and Social Change, and an Associate of Science degree in Infant Studies. She is currently working towards her PhD in Education.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction's appointee is:

Shanna Birkholz-Vasquez, of Folsom, has been Associate Director of the Early Education Division at the California Department of Education since 2024. She started working at the California Department of Education in 2022 as the Administrator of the UPK Implementation and Support Office. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology and a minor in Chicano Bilingual/Bicultural Studies from the University of California, Riverside, a Master of Science Degree in Reading from California State University, Fullerton as well as a degree in Educational Leadership from the University of Denver.

The Parent Advisory Committee's appointees are:

Lisette Frausto, of Oakland, has been a parent and community organizer for Kidango Child Care Center since 2018 and a medical biller for Optima Ophthalmic Medical Associates since 2015. Frausto is also a member of the Early Childhood Policy Council's Parent Advisory Committee.

Mary Ignatius, of San Francisco, is the Executive Director of Parent Voices California. Prior to this position, served as a statewide organizer for Parent Voices California from 2005 to 2023. She served on the California Assembly Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Childhood Education. Ignatius earned a Master of Social Work degree from Temple University. Ignatius is also the Chair of the Early Childhood Policy Council's Parent Advisory Committee.

The Workforce Advisory Committee's appointees are:

Miren Algorri, of Chula Vista, has been a childcare provider for Algorri Family Childcare since 1996. She is a member of the San Diego Family Childcare Association and California Family Childcare Network. Algorri is also a member of the Early Childhood Policy Council's Workforce Advisory Committee.

Tonia McMillian, of Bellflower, is a Family, Friend and Neighbor child care provider. Prior to this role, McMillian was owner of Kiddie Depot Family Child Care from 1996 to 2025. She is an instructor for the American Red Cross and a childcare provider-organizer at SEIU Local 99. McMillian served on the California Assembly Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Childhood Education. McMillian is also the Chair of the Early Childhood Policy Council's Workforce Advisory Committee.

Parent Advisory Committee Members

The Governor's appointees are:

Lisette Frausto, of Oakland, has been a parent and community organizer for Kidango Child Care Center since 2018 and a medical biller for Optima Ophthalmic Medical Associates since 2015.

Mary Ignatius, of San Francisco, is the appointed Chair of the Parent Advisory Committee. She is the Executive Director of Parent Voices California. Prior to this position, served as a statewide organizer for Parent Voices California from 2005 to 2023. She served on the California Assembly Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Childhood Education. Ignatius earned a Master of Social Work degree from Temple University.

Yenni Rivera, of Los Angeles, has been outreach coordinator for People Assisting the Homeless since 2018. She was director of operations for the Masters Workshop from 2014 to 2019 and a sales manager for Marriott International from 2012 to 2013. Rivera is a member of the California Partnership to End Domestic Violence and an ambassador for Parent Voices of California.

The Senate's appointees are:

Patrick D. MacFarlane, of Los Angeles, is Government Relations Manager at Child Care Resource Center (CCRC). He is a former Public Policy Associate at Crystal Stairs, Inc. and previously served as Senior Field Representative with the California State Assembly. A University of Arizona graduate, MacFarlane was born and raised in Los Angeles, where he resides with his wife Raquel and 2-year-old daughter Leah.

The Assembly's appointees are:

Deborah Corley-Marzett, of Bakersfield, has been a family daycare provider in Kern County for more than 20 years. She works with family daycare providers throughout the state—making it her mission to inform, educate and motivate family daycare providers to reach for greatness while demanding transparency in daycare. She is married with four children and seven grandchildren. Corley-Marzett is a Division II Shot Put Champion and an active union member Local 521 in Bakersfield. Corley-Marzett has a business degree from California State University, Bakersfield.

Patricia Lozano, of Los Angeles, has been the executive director of Early Edge California since 2017. Prior to joining Early Edge California, Lozano served as a senior program officer at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and worked on their national Early Learning strategy. In California, Lozano has spearheaded projects at UCLA's Center for Improving Child Care Quality, First 5 LA, and the RAND Corporation, and developed research and evaluation projects to find evidence-based best practices for teachers to work with Dual Language Learners. As a former teacher and associate director at a child development center, Lozano is passionate about supporting the needs of early childhood educators and improving quality for young children. She is also a member of the board of directors of Parents as Teachers (PAT), the nation's leading and most replicated parental education program, specializing in early childhood development through home visitation. Lozano holds a Bachelor of Arts from Los Andes University in Colombia and a Masters in Psychology (M.A.), Child Development Concentration, from California State University, San Bernardino.

Workforce Advisory Committee Members

The Governor's appointees are:

Miren Algorri, of Chula Vista, has been a childcare provider for Algorri Family Childcare since 1996. She is a member of the San Diego Family Childcare Association and California Family Childcare Network.

Virginia Eigen, of San Jose, has been a child development specialist for the Campbell Union School District since 2002. She is a member of the California Early Childhood Mentor Program and the California School Employees Association Chapter 868.

Tonia McMillian, of Bellflower, is the appointed Chair of the Workforce Advisory Committee. She is a Family, Friend and Neighbor child care provider. Prior to this role, McMillian was owner of Kiddie Depot Family Child Care from 1996 to 2025. She is an instructor for the American Red Cross and a childcare provider-organizer at SEIU Local 99. McMillian served on the California Assembly Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Childhood Education.

The Senate's appointees are:

Patricia Alexander, of Elk Grove, is a licensed in-home family childcare provider and has provided childcare for over 49 years. She is still operating her family childcare and preschool. She is currently a support leader and mentor with Solutions provider network to family childcare providers in the community and nationally since 1990 to present. Some of Alexander's involvements include being former President of Sacramento Valley Association for the Education of Young Children (SVAEYC) from 2011 to 2018, a past board member for the association, and currently past president of SVAEYC. She also served as the family childcare committee chair, legislation chair, and other duties. Pat is also past Vice President to Family Childcare Providers Association of Sacramento and board member from 2003 to 2017. She is also a former board member for the California Association for Family Childcare Providers (CAFCC). Alexander is currently a member of the Child Care Providers Union (CCPU) and has been a member for more than 16 years. She holds a degree in Early Childhood Education, with a specialization in ages 2-4 and a master teaching permit through the state of California.

AnnLouise Bonnitto, of Roseville, is the Tribal Child Development Director for the California Rural Indian Health Board, Inc. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Political Science/American Government and Jurisprudence from the University of California Berkeley. She also holds a Juris Doctorate degree in Law from the Lincoln Law School of Sacramento. With over 25 years of experience in her career, Bonnitto is the Director for both Tribal Head Start and Child Care and Development Fund Block Grant. She is best known for her expertise in health, education, budgets, administrative law, case management, social service and advocacy for tribes. In her current role, AnnLouise is responsible for managing a team of early education professionals for eighteen tribes in California.

Amelia M. Soto, of Gardena, is a Family Services Advisor at the Mexican American Opportunity Foundation of Head Start, where she has worked for the last 10 years. She was previously the Head Teacher in their Early Head Start classroom for children ages 18 months to 3 years. Soto has held a variety of roles teaching children from 18 months to 5 years old in her over 20-year career. She is an active member of SEIU Local 99, where she served on the Executive Board committees, participated in training other early educators as a peer trainer in Occupational Health and Safety, and has been a shop steward and bargaining team member. Soto is bilingual and has an Associate degree in Child Development and a director's teaching permit from the state of California.

The Assembly's appointees are:

Zoila Carolina Toma, of Signal Hill, was born in El Salvador in December 1981, and is now a resident of Los Angeles County, where she lives with her husband and three children. She is the CEO of Fun Minds, Inc, the corporation that owns Castle in the Sky Daycare and has been a licensed childcare provider and educator since September 2011. For many years, Toma has been a labor union/party activist, an education advocate, and a childcare provider-organizer at SEIU Local 99/ Child Care Providers Union (CCPU). Currently, she is attending college to complete her education in Early Childhood Education.

Debra Ward, of Brea, was the former Director of Cerritos College Child Development Center from 2006 to 2024. She also served in an adjunct faculty there and at Rio Hondo College. She held various positions with San Bernardino Valley College, first as adjunct Instructor for the Child Development Department from 1988 to 2004, and then as the Interim Child Development Grant Coordinator from 2001 to 2004. From 2004 to 2006, she held the position as full-time faculty and served as the Director of the Child Development Center at San Bernardino Valley College. She worked at the Redlands YWCA and YMCA, where she developed and implemented infant/toddler childcare programs, preschool programs, after-school-age programs, and a Teen/Senior Center for the Redlands community from 1977 to 2001. During her time at the YMCA of Redlands, she held the position of Senior Program Director for Child Care and Family Services from 1981 to 1989; and from 1990 to 2001, the Associate Executive Director. She was one of two women to serve as a member of the Redlands Noon Kiwanis Club in 1987, and the first woman President of the Redlands Noon Kiwanis Club in 1995. She is a former member of the Ebell of Los Angeles and a current member of the National Association for the Education of Young Children and The North American Reggio Emilia Alliance. She has been a Mentor Director for the California Early Childhood Mentor Program since 2014 and a Professional Growth Advisor since 1998. She formerly served as a member of the Community Care Licensing Advisory Committee for San Bernardino County. Debra Ward earned a Master of Science degree in Child Development from the University of La Verne.

Latonda Williams, of Los Angeles, is the Assistant Director of Program Services at Plaza de la Raza Child Development Services, Inc., where she currently serves on the Executive Team. She has worked within the Head Start Community for the last 11 years, starting as a Family Services Worker. Williams has held multiple positions that allowed her to support families, teachers, and family child care providers. She previously worked as the Early Head Start Manager for Allies for Every Child, formerly known as Westside Children's Center, where she developed and implemented the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership program.